

BOOKREVIEW

THE TUNES OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES: MUSIC AND DIPLOMACY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE (18th – 20th CENTURY)

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The issues of music practices, diplomatic processes, and cultural politics in Southeast Europe seem to have been relatively common in the scholarly discourses for a long time. However, depending on the specific field of knowledge (such as sociology, musicology, politicology, history), these issues tend to be analysed solely from one particular discipline's perspective. Hence, in the sociological, politicological, and historical overviews, the focus is traditionally on what is vaguely labelled as social and historical context and rarely include specific cultural aspects, such as music. Also, in the musicological dealing with politics and social issues, the problematisation easily stays within the boundaries of musical scores and biographical notes on the composers in question. From this perspective, the book *The Tunes of Diplomatic Notes: Music and Diplomacy in Southeast Europe (18th-20th century)*, edited by Ivana Vesić, Vesna Peno, Boštjan Udovič, and published by Belgrade and Ljubljana: Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences

and Arts, in Belgrade, and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ljubljana, stands out by its effort to overcome the thematic mentioned above, disciplinary, as well as geographical boundaries, bringing together dealing with the topics of the interrelation of the music practices and diplomacy in a broader range of interdisciplinary perspectives and on the examples of the practices in different parts of Southeast Europe.

The book *The Tunes of Diplomatic Notes: Music and Diplomacy in Southeast Europe (18th-20th century)* is an edited collection resulting from a scientific project *Identities of Serbian Music Within the Local and Global Framework: Traditions, Changes, Challenges*, funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, and implemented by the Institute of Musicology SASA (Belgrade, Serbia) and the bilateral project carried out by the Center for International Relations (Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana) and the Institute of Musicology SASA (Belgrade, Serbia). As stated by the editors, this edited collection “was inspired” (p. 8) by an international conference held in Belgrade in May 2019, and was the product of a fruitful collaboration of the scholars from the Institute of Musicology SASA and different academic institutions from Central and Southeast Europe. The book contains the introduction and three thematically shaped parts. Unlike numerous introductory parts in similar edited collections made as a follow up of a conference, this introductory chapter is not just a short overview of the reasons and motives for making the collection (which is to be found in the acknowledgement), but rather an elaborated chapter which provides insight into the historical, theoretical and conceptual framework of the book. Hence, it is pointed out that “despite the long history of using culture for different political purposes and interests”, it was only after creating nation-states and modern mass media this practice gained prominence (p. 9). From this perspective, it is further explained why the researchers of this topic mainly focus on the period between 18th and 20th century, particularly the Cold War era. Keeping in mind the mentioned tendency of many problematisations of diplomacy in scholarly discourses to

neglect the importance of music's role, the editors of this collection set the aim to fill in the missing gap.

The first part, named "Diplomacy behind the scenes: musicians' contact with the diplomatic sphere", contains chapters dealing with specific musical practises and musicians who had diplomatic careers or whose work was related to diplomacy. Those are the chapters on the European character of Dubrovnik and the Dalmatian littoral in the Enlightenment, in which Ivana Tomić Ferić points to the diplomatic ties of Luka and Miho Sorkočević, Julije Bajamonti and Ruđer Bošković; the analysis of the Serbian National Music Project as being constructed as a result of the diplomatic tendencies of the time (by Vesna Peno and Goran Vasin); and an often neglected perspective of the biography of Petar Bingulac, a famous musicologist and music critic – the perspective related to his diplomatic service. The second part of the book – "Reflections of Foreign Policies in National Music Spheres" – moves away from individual narratives on specific musicians towards a more general overview of the interrelations of the music life and diplomacy (in the chapters by Ranka Gašić on the musical life in Belgrade in the context of the global World War Two politics, Srđan Atanasovski on the work of the institution of Cvijeta Zuzorić in Belgrade, Stefanka Georgieva on cultural contacts between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in the 1930s, Florinela Popa on the Romanian music during the Cold War, and Lenka Křupková on the ideological implications of the avant-garde music practices). This part also includes dealing with the implications of the diplomatic disputes in the scholarly discourses in Serbia and Yugoslavia (in the chapter by Ivana Vesić). The final part of the book refers to the most original perspective of dealing with music and diplomacy, namely, considering the music itself as a means of cultural diplomacy. Unlike the previous ones, in which in most of the chapters the authors consider musical practices as being on one side, and the diplomatic ones as being on the other, the third part of the collection reminds the readers that the actual music should be seen as the medium of its own for pursuing diplomatic endeavours. This task is done in the analyses that deal with the

presentations of the specific political and cultural politics, as shown in the text about the presentation of the “New Yugoslavia” in France after 1945 by Aleksandra Kolaković, and in the chapter about the music politics in Yugoslavia after the split with the USSR by Biljana Milanović. The role of musical folklore in Yugoslavia’s Foreign Policy between 1949 and 1971, which is interestingly named “folklore diplomacy”, is analysed in the work by Ivan Hofman. Julijana Papazova point to the popular music practices showing how the music activities of Esma Redžepova and the Band Magnifico appear to be an example of one of the Yugoslav music diplomatic procedures; finally, Maja Vasiljević brings an essential contribution to the collection dealing with the often neglected issue of the influence of the Yugoslav non-aligned position on the specific international cultural politics.

Even though the collection provides a vast array of discourses, theoretical platforms, geographical and historical periods, and the parts and chapters are autonomous in their structure and topics, the whole book is united in putting forward a transparent message. Music has never been separated from societal, cultural, as well as political tendencies. Not only it can be easily connected and analysed in the context of global and local diplomacy tendencies, but it is itself one of the necessary means of diplomacy. Most of the chapters explicitly point to this critical insight, whereas all of them together bring to the impression that such conferences and collections fill in the gap between disciplines. Hence, it can be seen as a solid milestone for future collaborations between musicologists and scholars from other backgrounds that would contribute to a more multifaceted approach to the issues that are often unfairly wholly separated but are in fact inextricably linked, such as the issue of music and diplomacy. This collection can be recommended to both musicologists interested in wider political context of specific practices, and politicologists, historians and sociologists, who traditionally tend to ignore music as a relevant aspect of general politics. Additionally, the collection is helpful for further reconstructing and reconfiguring the actual concept of

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